

forded points of precarious support—led the fearless ruffian in safety to the ford below. On this occasion, however, there was more danger to be apprehended in the leap than any former one. The length of this flight—which had lasted from the forenoon till the shades of evening were beginning to fall—had deprived his limbs of their wonted strength and elasticity; and, perhaps, even the few years of toil, intemperance, and crime, that had elapsed since his last visit to the tower, had cast a weight upon his head, to which, during the progressive infirmity of the barthen, he had been insensible. It may be, too, that the dreadful deeds of the morning, so different in their character from the usual feats of arms—which, however bloody in their consequences, appeared to these lawless men as something honourable and praiseworthy—may have set with more than common weight upon his mind. But, however this may be, it was with an unsteady step he approached the brink of the precipice; and when a wild bird, which had built in the cliff, retired from her nest by the intrusion, burst away with a sudden scream, the bold outlaw started and grew pale; perhaps it was the cry of the devoted bird which it brought to his haunted recollection. Controlling his feelings, however, he went close to the edge of the cliff, and looked down for a moment into the abyss. Objects of a similar nature, occurring in the scenery of mountainous countries, do not usually impress the traveller with ideas of unmingled terror:—the trees bending across the chasm, and concealing with their foliage its depth and danger—the heath and the brush-wood clinging to the sides, like natural tapestry—and the projecting points of the rocks, raising their grey heads at intervals through the curtain, gave a romantic variety to the picture, and gild our fear with admiration. But these points of pictorial beauty and relief were here wanting: the naked sides of the rock were only variegated by the colours of the different strata, and by its own sharp and bare projections, stretching forth from either side like threatening knives, to deter or to mangle, while the river, rushing through the comparatively narrow channel below—although its voice was scarcely heard through the distance—seemed to light the dismal passage with its white foam. A sound of hasty footsteps behind did not permit the outlaw to indulge long in contemplation of this object; and, suddenly mustering up his resolution as well as he might, he stepped backwards a few paces, rushed to the edge of the cliff, and took the terrible leap. He did not, as heretofore, clear the chasm at a single effort; for it was his breast that first met the rock—his legs and the greater part of his body hanging over into the abyss. He was as brave a man, in the vulgar acceptance of the word, as ever faced a foe; but, at this moment, the cold drops of mortal terror burst over his forehead: he dug his hands into the hard and scanty earth that covered the surface of the landing-place, and clung convulsively with his feet to a slight projection on the side, that must have instantaneously given way to a less pressure had it not been of the hardest granite. It seemed for some time as if further effort was impossible—as if his heart's sole aim and desire was to remain fixed for ever in this frightful position, but as he found his strength gradually giving way, his hands relaxing in their grasp, and his feet slipping from their hold—and the conviction broke on his mind that, in a few minutes more, he must give himself up to a death the imagination shuddered at—desperation came to the aid of courage; and staking every thing on the event of a single movement—which, if unsuccessful, must plunge him into the gulph—he caught with his hands still closer to the rock, and pressing his feet with all his might against their slender hold, succeeded, by a violent muscular effort, in heaving himself upon the cliff.

‘Eternal curses on my nerveless limbs!’ cried the bridegroom arriving at the instant; ‘the Raven has reached his tower—and who may follow him?—Turn back,’ continued he, raising his voice into a furious shout, ‘ravisher! murderer! monster! all things bad but coward!’—Turn back! and I swear by every thing binding on man’s soul, to divide in twain my sword with thee; and, although thou deservest to die like a dog, to fight a fair fight with thee on this hill side, without friend or witness, save yonder setting sun, and Him who made it!’ But the Raven was deaf even to so courteous an offer; he lay on his back upon the cliff, apparently without sense or motion, his legs hanging over the side—seeming like the poet’s personification of Danger, to have thrown him

‘On the ridgy steep

Of some loose, hanging rock to sleep.’

‘Take this then, to rouse thee!’ said the bridegroom, tearing up by main force, a fragment of the rock, and hurling it across the chasm: it fell with a heavy sound across the outlaw’s breast; and he raised himself up like a chained mastiff at the pain and insult. ‘Who art thou?’ he cried, hardly seeming to recollect his situation; ‘what dost thou seek?’—‘What do I seek!’—‘O God!’—‘Look here!’ replied the bridegroom, stretching his arms and his body far over the cliff towards the destroyer, while his voice was choked with the opposite and yet combining emotions of grief and rage. ‘What do I seek?—See’st thou this handkerchief: a few hours ago it covered the fairest and the chastest bosom in broad Scotland; the red blots of murder, and the wrinkles of ruffian violence are on it now; and the covering of the bosom is reproach, and foulness, and dishonour!’—‘What do I seek? I seek,’ continued he, speaking through his clenched teeth, ‘I seek to fulfil the oath I made to heaven and to her—to steep this handkerchief, ravisher, in thy heart’s blood!’—‘Tempt me not!’ said the outlaw, ‘hast thou not tasted of my vengeance already? I am slackened on thee. Get thee gone—but cross no more the path of one who hast neither fear nor mercy.’

The avenger paused for an instant; and then paced too and fro by the edge of the rock with the restless and impatient step of the beast of prey along the bars of his cage; but soon his brow grew blacker, and his lips met with a firmer resolution. ‘He is spent with fatigue,’ he said aloud, ‘although commanding

with himself; he is weary with murder, or he would by this time have sought the ford. What holds me from leaping into his den? I am younger than he; my limbs are more supple than his. What care I for the cavern-lay which threatens death for the attempt?—my vengeance shall not be stayed with a song. It shall be so: the weight of despair is not surely greater than the weight of guilt.’ And so saying, he stepped backward to the proper distance, and began to prepare himself for the adventure. This he did, in the first place, by striking his blade into the ground, clasping his hands, raising up his face towards heaven, and repeating a short prayer for success; but, although he stood thus in attitude of Christian devotion, he might have seemed to resemble one of the ancient Alani, whose only object of worship, as Ammarias Marcellinus informs us, was a naked sword stuck in the earth. He then drew forth his good steel again, and, planting his feet firmly in their proper posture, was about to spring forward to the perilous undertaking. The outlaw, who had apparently watched his movements, and even heard his words, raised himself gradually from his reclining posture—first on his knees, and then, as his enemy’s preparations seemed to be nearly completed, upon his feet. ‘Stop!’ he cried, ‘witness that I have, at least not sought this. The event be on your own head! I confess that I am worn out—I am alone and unarmed; but the visitor who thrusts himself unbidden on me here, shall never live to tell what welcome he met with at the Raven’s Tower.’ The reply of the avenger was to wave the bloody handkerchief in the air, which he then placed in his bosom; and, clearing the intervening space at three rapid bounds, he darted from the side of the mountain. The desperation that prompted him to the adventure lent an energy to his limbs, which it was believed only one man of that day possessed, and he alighted on the brink of the rock; yet so barely was the feat performed, that, had he not seized hold of the outlaw’s arm, who struck a furious blow at him as he touched the ground, he could not have preserved his footing over for a single moment. They were both men of more than ordinary strength, and their mutual hate was more than of ordinary fierceness; and, had that meeting been upon the mountain’s side, or had the assailant even gained a firm footing on the rock, it is more than probable that the evening’s sun would have gone down upon the struggle. But here was no contest of warriors in the field—no flashing of the sword—no spilling of blood—no cries of triumph or vengeance! On the one part it was an instinctive, silent clinging to the only object of support within reach—and, on the other, a desperate but hopeless resistance against a power which seemed with supernatural force, to be gradually dragging him to perdition. They stood thus for some moments upon the smooth and sloping edge of the precipice, their frames convulsed and their sinews cracking with the intensity of their struggle, and yet their motion towards the brink scarcely perceptible. They looked into each other’s faces, and saw in the damp and ghastly features the image of death. ‘I warned thee!’ at last broke, in choked accents, from the white lips of the outlaw as their fate became certain, and a glare of rage and terror illumined for an instant his despair. The bridegroom replied by bending down his head, with a last effort, and tearing with his teeth from his bosom the bloody signal of vengeance, which he held up in the destroyer’s face. The next moment he fell backward into the abyss, still clinging with a death-clasp to his enemy, and they commenced their headlong descent; and so firmly did he retain his hold, that although the projecting points of the rock spattered their brains upon the wall, and mangled their bodies out of the form of men, yet they arrived, still hand in hand, in one mass of blood at the bottom of the cell—whence the pollution of human guilt and misery was instantaneously swept out by the indignant stream.

CLASSICAL STUDIES.

I think it incontestably true, that for the last fifty years our classical studies (with much to demand our undivided praise) have been too critical and formal; and that we have sometimes been taught, while straining after an accuracy beyond our reach, to value the husk more than the fruit of ancient learning: and if of late years our younger members have sometimes written prose Greek almost with the purity of Xenophon, or composed iambics in the finished diction of the Attic poets, we may well doubt whether time suffices for such perfection—whether the imagination and the taste might not be more wisely cultivated than by a long sacrifice to what, after all, ends but in verbal imitations. In short, whether such acquisitions, however beautiful in themselves, are not gained at the expence of something better. This at least is true, that he who forgets that language is but the sign and vehicle of thought, and while studying the word, knows little of the sentiment—who learns the measure, the garb, and fashion of ancient song, without looking to its living soul or feeling its inspiration—is not one jot better than a traveller in classic land, who sees its crumbling temples, and numbers, with arithmetical precision, their steps and pillars, but thinks not of their beauty, their design, or the living sculptures on their wall, or who counts the stones in the Appian Way, instead of gazing on the monuments of the ‘eternal city.’—*Sedgwick on the Studies of Cambridge.*

DISTRIBUTION OF WATER AND EARTH.

Wayward and irregular as the present distribution may seem, yet there is every reason to believe, that it is the distribution exactly suited to the necessities of the earth. ‘What would be the result, asks Dr. Prout,

‘for instance, if the Pacific or the Atlantic oceans were to be converted into continents? Would not the climate of the existing continents, as formerly observed be completely changed by such an addition to the land and the whole of their fertile regions be reduced to arid deserts? Now this distribution of sea and the land so wonderfully adapted as it appears to be to the present state of things, depends of course in a great measure upon the absolute quantity of water in the world, while on the other hand, relative gravity of water, as compared with that of the earth, keeps the ocean within its destined limits, notwithstanding its incessant motion. Thus Laplace has shown that the world would have been constantly liable to have been deluged from the slightest causes had the mean density of the ocean exceeded that of the earth. Hence the adjustment of the quantity of water, and of its destiny, as compared with that of the earth, afford some of the most marked and beautiful instances of design.’

TREATMENT OF CONVICTS IN NEW SOUTH WALES.

On the convict’s arrival he is assigned to a settler; registers of the applications are kept in the proper office, and the convicts, as they arrive, are given to the applicants in rotation: so that the convict cannot choose his master as appears to be understood in England. After his arrival at the farm, he is worked from sunrise to sunset for six days in the week, with an interval of one hour for dinner, and, in the summer season, of half an hour for breakfast; but, in many establishments one hour is given for the latter purpose. The work in this new country is of the most laborious description;—cutting down trees, the wood of which is of such hardness that English made tools break like glass before the strokes of the workman; making these trees into fires, and attending them, with the thermometer usually ranging in the middle of the day, from 80° to 100° for eight months in the year; grubbing up the stumps by the roots, the difficulty of which would appal an English woodman; splitting this hard wood into posts and rails, and erecting them into fences. The convict is not permitted to leave his master’s farm without a passport. For neglect of work, insolent words, or any turbulent or insubordinate conduct, he is liable to be taken before a magistrate and flogged, or confined in a solitary cell, or worked in irons on the public roads. He receives from his master seven pounds of beef and nine pounds of flour per week; the more liberal allow their servants two or three pounds of the latter in addition, with a quart of milk per diem, and two ounces of tobacco weekly. The last-mentioned allowances are given only during good behavior, and are consequently liable to stoppage at the will and pleasure of the master.—*New South Wales Magazine.*

GALLANTRY OF A SPANISH ROBBER.

The robbers of Andalusia differ from the others by their manners and gallantry, especially to the women, which are general, although exceptions may be found. A lady whom I know was saved from robbery, by her presence of mind and touching the point of honour of this singular race. She was travelling and had halted to breakfast in a defile where a band was stationed, who soon made their appearance. With admirable coolness she invited them to join her, in the frank manner usual in the country, which they accepted, and then left her unmolested. Instances occurred whilst I was in Spain of their returning the chattels of ladies when they took every thing besides; but this romantic generosity is not always displayed.—*Cooke’s Sketches in Spain.*

ARISTOCRATIC WOMEN.

SUCH among those aristocrats was the insolence of the men; the impertinence of the women, if possible, exceeded it. There is at present in England a dynasty of women of fashion, who make it their proud boast to enact deeds of arrogance, impudence, and folly, such as eye hath not seen nor imagination conceived. With these Aspasiæ the patrician political adventurer is all in all; the plebeian is nobody. With them no professional man can be a ‘gentleman’: scarcely a member of the lower House of Parliament can be such, until he must necessarily come, in time, to the upper. For example, I once heard Lady — say, in reference to Lord —’s removal to the upper house on the death of his father, ‘There, you know, he will be among gentlemen.’ Their idea of ‘gentleman’ is similar to that which Madame de Genlis, and her class, entertained of ‘gentilhomme,’ at least before the revolution. And what qualities, think ye, does that idea comprehend? Does it suppose a man of humane and affable demeanour; of the strictest honor in all his dealings; of firm, yet gentle temper, and enlightened understanding; a man that requires no law but his word to fulfil an engagement? Good God, sir, do you rave? You are on your death-bed. Are you about to die in a state of delirium? ‘No, sir. Hear me once more. Their gentlemen is an ignorant, idle, dissolute, selfish, unfeeling, remorseless, insolent, human brute, got by a patrician